

state of opinion is a danger which preoccupies me. We must neither furnish a pretext nor go to sleep." Bismarck, he added, was nervy and irritable. People were asking whether France would intervene in the event of a Russo-German war. De Lesseps visited Berlin on a semi-official mission, and assured the Chancellor of the pacific disposition of the President and the Cabinet; but so long as Boulanger remained a national hero, peace hung by a thread.

At the end of April, 1887, a spark seemed likely to set Europe ablaze. A French Police Commissioner named Schnaebelen, an Alsatian who had opted for France in 1871, was invited by a German Police Commissioner to meet him for a discussion of administrative business. On reaching the *rendezvous* on the German side of the frontier he was seized, and after a struggle was carried off to Metz. The excuse for this outrage was that he had misused his official position for purposes of espionage, and that his arrest, if ever he crossed the frontier, had been decreed by the High Court at Leipzig—a fact unknown to the French Government. Once again Boulanger urged a military demonstration, and once more Grafvitz intervened to prevent it. Flourens kept his head and forwarded to Berlin photographs of the letters of invitation from the German official. Bismarck at once admitted that the invitation implied a safe conduct which must be respected despite Schnaebelen's grave offence. A week after his arrest he was at liberty, but he had exceeded his functions and was removed from his post. Though the Governments kept cool, for both of them had been disagreeably surprised by the incident, the temperature of public opinion on both sides of the Rhine had risen to boiling point. The fiery Deroulle taxed the Cabinet with cowardice, and argued

that the time  
had come to finish with Bismarck's "  
provocations." French-  
men maintained that Germany had tried to pick  
a quarrel, and  
Goblet, the Premier, declared that it would  
perhaps have been  
better to fight. The Germans continued to  
believe that  
Boulanger was master of France and might give  
the signal for  
invasion at any moment.

President Grevy, whose devotion to peace was  
only equalled  
by his contempt for Boulanger, remarked to  
Goblet: "I  
receive many people; no one desires war, neither  
the Chamber  
nor the country." Though this was by no means  
true he had  
long determined to get rid of the firebrand,  
who, as he sub-  
sequently confided to the German Ambassador,  
had on two